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January 2025

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Reanna Santos



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ON THE COVER

Reanna Santos, the Miss Rodeo North Texas Fair poses in her crown, sash, and chaps. (Photo provided by the North Texas Fair and Rodeo)



letter from the editor

Hello readers, and welcome to the January edition of the North Texas Farm & Ranch magazine! The new year is a time of fresh starts, resolutions, and it just carries an air of excitement.

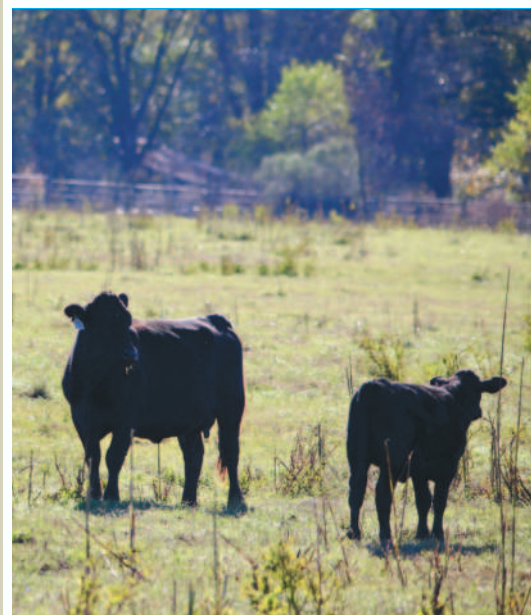
In this edition, we meet the rodeo queen and her court that represents the North Texas Fair and Rodeo. It has been a long-standing tradition of this magazine to cover the Miss North Texas Fair, and I am proud to continue the tradition with Miss Reanna Santos.

Also in this edition is a new piece on women in the outdoors, an exploration into damages caused by feral hogs, and many excellent insights from our regular contributing writers.

I hope you start your new year off strong with us, and as always, follow along on Instagram, Facebook, and X, and subscribe to our weekly inbox to ensure you don't miss a thing.

Happy New Year!

Hannah Claxton
Hannah Claxton, Editor
editor@ntfronline.com



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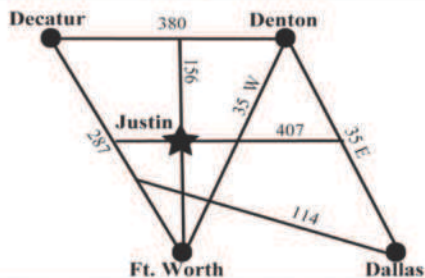
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FACEBOOK WALL

 North Texas Farm & Ranch
November 19 at 8:06 PM

Emma handed off her title on Saturday. We can't wait to see what the next young ladies achieve! Thank you, Emma!



 North Texas Farm & Ranch
October 26

TEXAS PUMPKIN FACTS:



Pumpkin is the official **State Squash of Texas.**

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West Texas accounts for about **90%** of pumpkins grown in the state.

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Feel free to drop us a line at editor@ntfronline.com or share your comments on our social media pages. You might even see your name in the next issue!



Both of these photos are submissions from columnist Annette Bridges, after a recent trip to northwestern Arkansas. Annette and her family drove Hwy 23 from Ozark to Cass, then east on Hwy 215 and Hwy 103 to Ozark. "The leaves are always the prettiest along a river that meanders and follows Hwy 215," said Annette.



READER SUBMISSIONS

MEANWHILE BACK AT THE RANCH

By Rayford Pullen | rcpullen@yahoo.com



Calves are worth what they've never been before, representing a new era of the cattle business. (Photo by Hannah Claxton)

Like the Bob Seger song, “Turn the Page,” we find ourselves heading into a new year with the same hopes and dreams that we have each year that as opportunities arise, we are smart enough to recognize and take advantage of them. Here’s hoping that we can do just that.

With the later than normal first freeze of the year, our cattle have had extra time to put on more weight headed into winter which helps with breed back in the case of fall calving cows and has our spring calving cows, in the middle of winter, be in better shape when they calve.

We have also upped our winter feeding this year as we try to do everything to have a higher weaning percentage. Once again, the rules have changed, with so


much at stake as it relates to our investment risks and income potential. We cannot afford to take as many chances as we have been doing. As of this writing, we can literally lock in selling prices for 1,000-pound steers for over \$2,500 using the LRP, livestock risk protection insurance, available to producers. I cannot wrap my mind around these kinds of numbers, and neither can I wrap my mind around giving \$1,600+ for a stocker calf.

As I travel around the countryside, I see the quality difference between herds. While this many times relates to environmental conditions, especially along the gulf coast, most of the time, especially in northern Texas and beyond, it’s strictly genetics. This in part is probably due to tax in-

centives and or just having cattle as yard ornaments with income not being consequential. With average herd sizes being around 50 head, and cattle income being secondary to off farm income, it’s no big deal. Still, it is not in the best interest of our industry to produce cattle that are subpar in meat quality.

As a seed stock producer, and I’m speaking for lots of us, we see a resistance to replacement cattle prices, especially bulls. This has continued even as weaned calf prices have soared. The price to many customers is seen strictly as an expense and not as an investment in their long-term genetics of the heifers they keep or the extra pounds they will be selling which in many cases will exceed \$4,000 annually {30 calves weighing an extra 50 pounds each} if the cattle

are managed correctly. With a bull lasting four to five years, you do the math. It is a hazard of the trade and here to stay. One thing we do here is make sure our potential customers know the price of our bulls or heifers before they show up, which shakes out the tire kickers and low ballers.

Having gotten that off my chest, I would certainly like to thank North Texas Farm and Ranch, Texas Angus Association, Land and Livestock Post, North Texas eNews and the Clay County Leader for allowing me to share my thoughts and ideas with their readers. As for me, it’s time to “Turn the Page,” as this will be my last article. It has been my pleasure and may “God bless you all.” It’s a wonderful time to be in the cattle business. 

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78.88 ACRES | CLAY COUNTY



OLD MAN PLACE

\$4,750/Ac

Located just north of Dean on FM 2393, 15 minutes east of Wichita Falls in Clay County. The land is completely wooded with mesquites offering great cover for wildlife. The topography is level to slightly sloping. There is one stock pond near the road frontage with ample room for construction of new stock ponds if desired. Electricity and Dean Dale Water is available along FM2393. This would make a great hunting property, or build your dream home.

215.18 ACRES | WICHITA COUNTY



SIMS FARM

\$2,395/Ac

Located west of Burkburnett and north of Iowa Park on the south and east side of FM 368. The property consists of approximately 145 acres of farmland with the balance being native mesquite pasture. The topography is level to sloping southeast. Amenities include a stock pond and barbed wire perimeter fence. No minerals are owned.

79.30 ACRES | WICHITA COUNTY



REILLY RANCH

\$4,750/Ac

Ideal combo property offering hunting, fishing and other recreational activities, numerous agricultural uses and/or build your dream home. Level to sloping terrain, sloping toward Middle Fork Pond Creek. This area is heavily wooded and is within the flood plain. The remainder of the land is open native pasture with moderate coverage of hardwoods and scattered mesquites. It is fenced and cross fenced, 2 stock ponds, equipment shed, loafing shed, 2 water meters and electricity available.

300.14 ACRES | WICHITA COUNTY



EDSEL FARM

\$3,250/Ac

The Edsel Farm is located less than a half mile north of US HWY 287. Excellent access with frontage on Huntington, Kiel and Wellington Lane. The land consists of 300.139 total acres, 165 acres is tillable farmland, balance being moderate to heavily wooded native pasture. There are partial cross fences, boundary is fenced in average condition. Surface water consist of three ponds, seasonal creek and East Fork Pond Creek, partial floodplain. Electricity and water appear available along Huntington and Kiel.

254.20 ACRES - WICHITA COUNTY



ALEXANDER RANCH

\$4,200/Ac

Nice all around property located 15 minutes from Wichita Falls. Ideal for running cattle, hunting, or building a home. Moderate mesquite coverage, above average grasses, rolling topography with tremendous views, 2 seasonal creeks, 3 stock ponds, completely fenced and cross fenced, livestock pens, electricity available, water available. Light oil production isolated to the southeast corner, minerals are negotiable with an acceptable contract.

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Maag Tract 3 - 19.45 Acres - Archer Co - \$8,483/Acre

Old Man Place - 51.15 Acres - Clay Co - \$8,778/Acre

Thornberry Lots - 4.5 Acres - Wichita Co - \$45,000

Decker Farms - 5.03 Acres - Archer Co - \$75,000

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Land Market Report

By Jared Groce

Happy New Year everyone! Another election year is behind us, Praise God! Election years always seem to make people nervous with the uncertainty that abounds, and regardless of the outcome of an election, business always seems to pick up again after the election is over. Personally, I am just glad to not have to watch another dang political ad for a while.

For the six counties that I track (Collin, Cooke, Denton, Grayson, Montague, Wise) we saw less than a one percent increase in the price per acre, which is basically flat line. The demand for rural land seemed to be diminished quiet a bit as compared to 2023, and that can be seen in the fact that it took 24 percent longer to sell a tract of land in 2024 as compared to 2023, and there were 5.57 percent fewer sales transactions.

Our area is extremely diverse in land characteristics and uses, and therefor can have huge differences in the price per acre. From cultivated farm land, to orchards and vineyards, to pasture, recreational or development, we are definitely blessed with diversity here. The counties that I track are also very diverse in their populations, ranging from well over one million in Collin and Denton, to just over 22,000 in Montague. As you will see on the charts below, some counties were more successful than others in 2023. It is also worth noting that one major transaction can have a drastic change in the averages.

I hope you have enjoyed my articles again this past year, and I am always open to hear from readers about it. Feel free to contact me at jgroce@mossyoakproperties.com. Remember, the best time to plant a tree is 20 years ago. The second best time is today. Same is true for buying land! 🌳

COLLIN COUNTY			WISE COUNTY		
	2023	2024		2023	2024
Avg. Acreage	41.67	34.28	Avg. Acreage	61.22	31.89
Avg. \$ Per Acre	\$54,407	\$61,474	Avg. \$ Per Acre	\$17,881	\$21,689
Avg. DOM	143	181	Avg. DOM	128	141
MONTAGUE COUNTY			COOKE COUNTY		
	2023	2024		2023	2024
Avg. Acreage	47.7	47.86	Avg. Acreage	50.49	45.21
Avg. \$ Per Acre	\$11,444	\$12,022	Avg. \$ Per Acre	\$28,756	\$22,774
Avg. DOM	216	229	Avg. DOM	157	194
DENTON COUNTY			GRAYSON COUNTY		
	2023	2024		2023	2024
Avg. Acreage	37.4	44.51	Avg. Acreage	34.03	44.24
Avg. \$ Per Acre	\$74,006	\$64,604	Avg. \$ Per Acre	\$31,281	\$33,281
Avg. DOM	166	173	Avg. DOM	104	213



AG *elsewhere* ARKANSAS

PHOTO | DESCRIPTION BY KYLE ENGLAND




This little heifer had found herself on the wrong side of fence, and needed some help getting things right again. Until we were able to come to her aid, her mama stood watch. 🐾

AG *elsewhere* MONTANA

PHOTO | DESCRIPTION BY LINDSEY MONK



Here's to another trip around the sun! One chapter, or gate, closes. . And another opens. Wishing everyone a successful year and good health for themselves and livestock. 

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Grazing North Texas

By Tony Dean, tonydean.tx1@gmail.com

Winecup

It's easy for us to take for granted the multiple forbs that are growing throughout our North Texas and Oklahoma grazing lands. They play an important part in the health of our soils and of our livestock, and we should be aware of how they fit in our grazing environment.

Winecup is one of the forbs that many of us can recognize. There are both annual and perennial species, and of significant numbers in our area is Trailing winecup, which is a perennial.

This low-growing plant originates from a turnip-shaped root and has vine-like hairy stems that grow both spreading, and sometimes weakly ascending, up to two feet long.

It can grow in a variety of soils, but prefers a well-drained site, and can grow in full sun to partial shade.

The flowers are solitary, cup-shaped, and composed of five beautiful wine-colored petals that transition to light pink at the base of each petal. The flowers can be up to two inches in diameter, blooming from February to June, depending upon environmental conditions.

From a grazing standpoint, winecup is readily eaten by all classes of livestock, and forage value for deer is excellent. Crude protein has been tested at 18 percent in January during the new growth period, and 13 percent during the later spring months. Energy values are moderate to high.

The flowers are not only beautiful, but are also visited by many species of butterflies, and are often pollinated by bees.

Due to its growth early in the year, winecup can sometimes be heavily grazed at the beginning of spring, because many other plants are still dormant. A correct stocking rate along with rotational grazing will usually assure that it can remain in a healthy pasture.

Forbs can become too dominant in some pastures during wet years, and we are tempted to spray herbicides to reduce the competition with grasses.

Reduction of the forbs can grow more grass, but in doing that, we give up the value of the beneficial forbs like Winecup.

For medicinal purposes, crushed dried roots were inhaled for head colds, and aching limbs were exposed to the smoke to reduce pain. Roots were boiled, then the tea drunk for pain.

Ferdinand Lindheimer, the naturalist who first identified and categorized Winecup while in South Texas, is often called the father of Texas botany because of his work as the first permanent-resident plant collector of Texas.

Lindheimer was educated in Germany and became a teacher. He later became active in German politics, and his political affiliations alienated his family and placed him at risk. He immigrated to the United States as a political refugee.

In 1836, aroused by reports of the Texas Revolution, he traveled to New Orleans and ended up in Texas where he enlisted in the army and served until 1837.

He then served as a botanist in St. Louis, and later worked nine years collecting specimens in Texas.



(Above) Winecup is not only a beautiful forb but is also good grazing (Below) Winecup is readily eaten by all classes of livestock. (Photos courtesy of Tony Dean)


Grazing Value of This Plant

Winecup



He settled in New Braunfels, and was granted land on the banks of the Comal River. Lindheimer ran a school for gifted children, and attempted to establish a botanical garden. He was also publisher of a newspaper, served as the first Justice of the Peace of Comal County, and continued to

work as a naturalist.

During his career, he is credited with the discovery of several hundred plant species, and his name is used to designate 48 species and subspecies of plants. He died in 1879 and is buried in New Braunfels. His house is now a museum. 

Sitz Angus praised for 100-plus years of Angus

By Certified Angus Beef

Family-run businesses that last 100 or more years often leave a legacy, and when an Angus herd lasts that long the breed comes together to celebrate the accomplishment. At the 2024 Angus Convention in Fort Worth, Texas the American Angus Association® honored Sitz Angus of Dillon and Harrison, Montana with the Century Award for their 100-plus years as a registered Angus herd.

“Being able to say we’ve been in the Angus business for over 100 years – that’s a feat itself,” said Jim Sitz of the Sitz Angus.

William and Frieda Sitz started Sitz Angus in the Nebraska Sandhills in 1923 with the purchase of registered Angus cows from William Williams of Clarks, Nebraska. William and Frieda had four children: Robert “Bob”, Bill, Dolores, and Ruth. In 1952, William and Frieda moved with son, Bob (Sr.), to a ranch in Longmont, Colorado. In 1959, two years after Bob married Donna Scriffiny, the young couple purchased a ranch in Harrison, Montana and moved the herd.

In Harrison, Bob Sr. and Donna raised two daughters and two sons – Deb, Sherrie, Bob, and Jim - while being early champions of performance testing and Angus Herd Improvement Records (AHIR®). In 1966, Sitz Angus hosted its first bull sale and began offering customers free delivery of their bulls. The family was also early adopters of artificial insemination. All four of Bob Sr. and Donna’s children are still involved in the cattle business through Sitz Angus, Bar 69 Angus Ranch and Stockman Angus of New Zealand.

Bob Sr. was inducted into the Angus Heritage Foundation in



Sitz Angus was awarded the American Angus Association Century Award at the 2024 Angus Convention on Nov. 3 in Fort Worth, Texas. Pictured from left are 2024 Miss American Angus Lauren Wolter, Jim Sitz, Tammi Sitz, Amber Konen, Tyler Sitz, Tucker Sitz, Taylre Sitz, Bob Sitz, and Association CEO Mark McCully. (Photo courtesy of Certified Angus Beef)

1993, four years after his untimely death. Donna and her sons persevered through the loss with a cow sale and rebuilt the herd. The brothers, Jim and Bob, are 2024 inductees into the Angus Heritage Foundation.

Leaving a legacy of leadership within the breed at both the state and national level, Bob Sr. served on the American Angus Association Board of Directors from 1979 to 1985. Donna was an active member of the National Angus Auxiliary and Montana Angus Auxiliary. Jim followed in his father’s footsteps, serving on the Board of Directors from 2009 to 2016 and as president in 2016. In 2001, Sitz Angus donated the Angus Foundation Heifer.

Today, William and Frieda’s grandsons, Bob and Jim, along

with Jim’s wife Tammi (Huntsman), run Sitz Angus in Harrison and Dillon, Montana with their families. (The Dillon ranch was acquired in 1997.) The fourth generation, known sometimes as “the Sitz six,” are preparing to make their mark on the Angus breed as they each find unique ways to support the ranch through cattle breeding, raising crops, bookkeeping, hosting interns, influencing range management and even managing social media and promotion. They are Taylre, Lane, Amber, Ashley, Tyler and Tucker Sitz. Speaking of the next generation on the ranch, Jim said, “I see no reason why they shouldn’t be able to take it to a whole new level.”

Sitz Angus sires have consistently held spots in the list of top 25 sires for breed registration and

sell high-quality Angus genetics across the United States and internationally. The family offers yearling bulls each spring and nearly 2-year-old bulls at their annual fall sale. While being well-known for their bulls, Sitz Angus maintains its status as a MaternalPlus® herd, as it has since the program’s first year in 2012, proving their focus on producing high-performing, profit-yielding females for their commercial customers. After 100 years with the Business Breed, Sitz Angus – the family and others who have been dedicated to its success – still exhibits a forward-thinking attitude and a love of Angus cattle.

“My dad always said a long time ago that we have to be a jack of all trades,” Jim said. “That fits Sitz Angus ranch to a T.”

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Noble Learning:

Four Ways Feral Hogs Cost Farmers and Ranchers

By Laura Brenner



Trapping feral hogs is the most effective way to manage populations that damage farm and ranch land. (Photo courtesy of Noble Learning.)

Noble Research Institute ranch manager Curtis Larson has a quick answer when he's asked how producers would know if they had feral hogs on their land.

"You can see exactly where they're rooting up the pasture, going for stuff in the ground, grub worms and such," says Larson, pointing to an affected section of pasture on Noble's Coffey Ranch west of Marietta, Oklahoma.

Proof of their presence is often visible in your fields or pastures, as extensive digging or rooting, muddy wallows, bark rubbed off trees, and hoof prints. Determining if you have a feral hog problem isn't the challenge – controlling them is.

Feral hogs are a growing threat that wreak havoc on a ranch's landscape, resources and bottom line. Annually, they cause an estimated \$1.5 billion in damage

across the U.S., with around nine million of them reported across 35 states.

Here are four of the major ways feral hogs can damage your land and threaten the health of your livestock and native wildlife, followed by recommendations for controlling feral hog populations on your ranch.

It's estimated that a single feral hog can cause \$500 worth of damage to fields and pastures. More when they get into pecan orchards. Weighing between 100 and 350 pounds, an average adult male or female feral hog is a formidable animal.

"They'll root up a spot as big as a half-acre. They will just completely tear it up looking for insects, getting grass roots, old pecans, and such," says Derick Warren, research services associate at Noble. A call to Warren is the

first step Noble ranch managers take when they see evidence of feral hogs on any of the ranches.

From a ranch management perspective, Larson has seen feral hogs create such damage that it takes the pasture a year to recover. Speaking from experience on a friend's ranch, Larson has seen mowers, rakes and other field equipment damaged when trying to traverse the field after feral hogs.

Beyond such immediate damage, long-term effects of feral hog damage can be devastating. On sloped landscapes, the opportunity for erosion is high while forages attempt to reseed and take root. What's more, waste from feral hogs may contain seeds from invasive species that will take hold under the right conditions.

The presence of feral hogs can greatly diminish water quality on

a ranch, posing a threat to livestock. All pigs, wild and domestic, rely on water to cool themselves. They'll create wallows – muddy areas in tall timbers or along a waterline – to coat their skin in mud and soil ranch water resources.

Larson is quick to fence cattle away from any water that may be contaminated by feral hog waste. A common method of disease transmission between feral hogs and livestock is through indirect contact with contaminated feces or urine, making water sources a hot zone for disease risk.

Another hot zone is feeding areas. Feral hogs, like other animals, are attracted to any feed areas, and they're smart. They'll learn where feeding happens and use that to their advantage.

The economic concern is less about the loss of feed and more the risk of disease spreading from

feral hogs to livestock.

Not only have they been documented to push cattle, especially calves, away from feed areas, they can transfer disease to domestic animals through contact with their waste products. As many as a third of the feral hog population are carriers of the pseudorabies virus. This disease can spread to dogs and livestock.

Feral hogs also may be infected with brucellosis and leptospirosis, which can be passed to livestock and humans.

Feral hogs are opportunistic omnivores. That's how Noble regenerative ranching advisor Josh Gaskamp refers to their diet. Which means they'll dig into cattle feed as eagerly as they will attack smaller livestock, fawns and ground-nesting birds. Feral hogs are known to raid ground-nesting birds' nests, hurting northern bobwhite quail and wild turkey populations.

Gaskamp keeps sheep on his ranch in southern Oklahoma. Since getting guardian dogs, he's reduced depredation opportunities for the feral hogs on his property. Noble ranch managers also report fewer feral hog problems where guardian dogs are in use.

Many farmers' or ranchers' first instinct may be to deter feral hogs through hunting or targeted shooting. But Warren and Gaskamp would discourage ranchers from taking that approach.

"If you shoot at them, you might get rid of one, but the rest scatter. Then they become your neighbor's problem for a while," says Warren. This is why Gaskamp recommends working with neighboring ranches to control feral hog populations.

"I have a 160-acre ranch," says Gaskamp. "I can control those acres, but if my neighbors are doing nothing, we're collectively doing nothing. Pigs don't stay

within one ranch."

He suggests ranchers invest in control mechanisms together.

Based on four years of research during work on his master's thesis, Gaskamp developed a monitored, suspended trapping system for feral hogs. Today, the BoarBuster(TM) trap is used on Noble ranches to control feral hog populations. Gaskamp and Warren like the trap because it can be set up by one or two people and deployed remotely.

The BoarBuster trap works with an integrated camera that sends a live feed to a rancher's smartphone. The rancher can wait until enough pigs are in the trap, then drop it with a tap of the screen.

Other trapping methods include a drop net and on-the-ground, corral-style traps. But Gaskamp says he knows there's no one-size-fits-all prescription for feral hog control.

What works for one farmer or rancher might not work on another operation.

If trapping isn't feasible for your operation, or you want a helping hand, Gaskamp suggests calling your state's office of the USDA-Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service Wildlife Services. APHIS administers the National Feral Swine Damage Management Program and employs professionals tasked with monitoring and controlling the nation's feral hog threat.

Gaskamp reminds ranchers that controlling feral hog populations is a process, not a single event, and that it takes patience.

"You have to habituate pigs to a bait site" when trapping, he says. "Then you can set up a trap and allow the pigs to adjust to that in their environment. After 10 to 14 days, maybe longer, you can set the trap and choose the right time to drop."TM



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Miss Rodeo North Texas Fair

Reanna Santos Claims Prestigious Rodeo Queen Title

By Hannah Claxton, editor | editor@ntfronline.com

The North Texas Fair and Rodeo, held annually in Denton, Texas, has a rich history that dates back to 1928. Originally conceived as a small agricultural fair, it was organized to showcase the region's farming and ranching heritage while promoting local businesses and community engagement.

The fair quickly gained popularity, and by 1958, it incorporated a rodeo, which became a central feature of the event. The rodeo added an exciting element to the fair, drawing competitors and spectators from across the region to witness events like bull riding, barrel racing, and steer wrestling.

Over the years, the fair grew in size and scope, expanding to include live entertainment, carnival rides, livestock shows, and various exhibitions celebrating North Texas culture.

Today, the North Texas Fair and Rodeo has become one of the largest and most anticipated events in the region, attracting thousands of visitors each August. It remains true to its roots, continuing to celebrate the region's agricultural and ranching heritage while incorporating modern elements such as concerts, arts and crafts, and food vendors.

The rodeo, which is now a Professional Rodeo Cowboys

Association sanctioned event, draws top-tier competitors from across the state- both in the arena and for the accompanying rodeo queen contest.

Rodeo queens serve as the official ambassadors of rodeo events, playing a vital role in promoting the sport and its traditions. Their primary responsibility is to represent the rodeo in public appearances, often attending local events, parades, school visits, and charity functions. These queens are expected to have a deep knowledge of the sport, including its history, values, and the skills involved in various rodeo events like bull riding, barrel racing, and

calf roping.

In addition to their ambassadorial duties, rodeo queens must also be skilled in horsemanship, as they are often required to perform riding exhibitions at rodeo events. These exhibitions may include barrel racing, flag presentations, or other rodeo-related demonstrations. A rodeo queen's role extends beyond simply being a representative- they are expected to embody the ideals of sportsmanship, poise, and leadership while demonstrating their love for the Western lifestyle. Winning the title is often just the beginning of a queen's journey, as they continue to engage with the community, promote rodeo, and serve as role models for future generations of rodeo fans and athletes.

Reanna Santos had not held a rodeo queen title prior to winning Miss Rodeo North Texas Fair in August of 2024, but she has been involved in the rodeo lifestyle for many years.

"I can't even remember my first time on a horse," Santos explained. "I'm sure it was before I even had any memories at all."

Santos is a student at Texas A&M University in College Station, where she is completing her masters degree in rangeland and ecology management. It was the close-knit equine community that drew her to the North Texas area to compete at the North Texas Fair and Rodeo, despite growing up in the Houston area. Santos' family has deep connections to the equine community- her parents showed carriage horses all the way to the Olympic level- and Santos herself grew up competing in the all-around events and rodeoing. During her undergraduate, Santos was





a member of the equestrian team.

Rangeland and Ecology Management is a degree focused on the study of natural resource management, environmental science, and the preservation of land for future generations. Students in this field learn about the ecological, social, and economic aspects of land use, with an emphasis on sustainable practices that protect biodiversity, water resources, and soil health.

“I have been studying invasive species in the south Texas rangeland, which is a very niche part of the agriculture industry, but it’s so important,” Santos said. “I get to work closely with ranchers all across the state to conserve our greatest natural resource—our land and water. We are just temporary stewards of a resource that was here long before us and will hopefully be here long after us.”

Coursework for this type of degree often includes topics such as environmental law, wildlife management, land restoration, GIS (Geographic Information Systems), and conservation policy. Graduates with a land conservation degree are prepared to work in a variety of roles, such as land trust organizations, government agencies, nonprofit groups, or private consulting firms, where they help to create and implement strategies for conserving natural landscapes, managing parks and protected areas, or advising on sustainable land development practices. The degree offers opportunities for those passionate about environmental stewardship to make a positive impact on the future of our planet’s ecosystems.

“The skills we learn as rodeo queens are so transferable to life, and to a career,” explained Santos. “I know that I’m learning so much.”

The rodeo queen for the North Texas Fair and Rodeo is selected after a rigorous competition that involves modeling, a speech, a question and answer session, ticket sales, an interview, and a ride through a horsemanship pat-

tern. Throughout the duration of the competition, participants are also judged on how they interact with the public, how they present themselves, and their knowledge of rodeo.

“All of the girls who competed were so talented,” said Santos of her fellow competitors. “Any of them would have been great ambassadors for the fair and for rodeo in general, so I feel really lucky to have been chosen.”

Since both the competition and the involvement are rigorous, it’s easy to wonder why a female in her early twenties, with so many other things going on, would choose to participate.

“It’s such a great opportunity to represent a rodeo and association that aligns with my personal values,” said Santos. “They are so involved in the community in Denton county and so welcoming to all the athletes that it really does feel like a family when you’re there.”

Being a rodeo queen is about more than just a title—it’s a chance to become a strong leader, an advocate for the sport, and a role model for others, all while fostering personal growth and exploring new opportunities. Through events and the competition itself, a rodeo queen title encourages a young woman to step outside her comfort zone and establish herself as a pillar of the community.

“So many people have poured into me and inspired me with their time, resources, and talent, and whenever I get the chance to pour into someone else the way they did me, I try to take it,” shared Santos. “This title allows me so many opportunities to hopefully inspire someone else in that way.”

There is often a stereotype about rodeo queening not being something that an individual without experience can jump into. For Santos, it certainly was difficult, but it was her fellow competitors, and now her court, who helped her figure it out.



(Above) Part of Santos duties is to attend events representing the North Texas Fair. (Below) Santos works with other rodeo staff to present the flags and entertain the crowd. (Photos courtesy of North Texas Fair)



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One of the most well recognized roles of a rodeo queen is to present the American flag during the national anthem at rodeo events. Santos presented the flag during the performances of the North Texas Fair and Rodeo. (Photo courtesy of North Texas Fair and Rodeo)

“Starting as a rodeo queen is definitely the hardest part but I would encourage girls to just go for it because you will never know unless you try,” said Santos. “One thing that has really touched my heart is how willing everyone is to help you, even your fellow competitors. You aren’t competing against others, you are competing against yourself.”

The North Texas Fair and Rodeo Queen has a court consisting of a teen, princess, and junior. These ladies also attend events, carry flags, and advocate for the sport of rodeo and for agriculture, despite their young age.

The Miss North Texas Fair Teen is Rhealyn Bridwell. Rhealyn is the 18 year old daughter of Jeremy and Brook Bridwell of Collinsville, TX. She is a 2024 home school graduate. She dreams

of becoming the all around cowgirl by training her own horses, giving lessons, and working with a farrier. She hopes to encourage other first generation cowgirls to follow their dreams. As a Rodeo competitor, she enjoys Breakaway and Team Roping.

The Miss North Texas Fair Princess is Caroline Mataska. Caroline Mataska is 14 years old and is from Wichita Falls, Texas. She is in the 8th grade at Henrietta Junior High where she plays volleyball, competes in track, and serves as the Vice-President of the National Junior Honor Society. Outside of school, she plays for WF ELITE Volleyball. As a first-year FFA member, she is proud to be a Greenhand and looks forward to growing in the program.

The Miss North Texas Fair Junior is Harper Mayes. Harper

is 8 years old and is from Aubrey, TX. She is in the 2nd grade at PCA North. Harper participates in Junior PGA golf, running, speech competitions, and is active in her church youth group. She enjoys competing in APHA and PtHA shows in Western, English and speed events with her paint horses. Being the NTFR Junior Princess is her first title and she thinks it has been an amazing experience so far!

Santos encourages anyone desiring to compete for a Miss North Texas Fair title to throw their hat in the ring

“At one of the events I’ve attended, there was an older man who reminded me to shoot for the moon with my goals, because even if I felt like I had failed, I’d still have landed among the stars,” shared Santos. “That has really

inspired me to dream big.”

The North Texas Fair and Rodeo runs from Aug. 15 to 24 in 2025.

Applications to compete for any of the positions on the rodeo queen court are due earlier in the summer, usually in June. Aside from the rodeo queen contest and rodeo itself, there are many other ways for someone to get involved, and Santos encourages everyone to check it out.

“Whether it’s rodeoing, showing livestock, or competing in a baking or photography contest, the north texas fair really does have something for everyone,” said Santos. “That’s something that sets us apart- we really are for the community.”

To learn more visit ntfair.com or follow along on social media for updates.



New Year New Season

By Krista Lucas | Copy Editor



The new rodeo season kicked off on Oct. 1, and Taylor started it off well, winning nearly \$8,000. (Photo courtesy of Fallon Taylor)

The year 2025 has just begun, but the new rodeo season kicked off back on Oct. 1. With that came the Women's Professional Rodeo Association World Finals, held in conjunction with Elite barrel racing, in Waco, Texas.

Contestants got a jump start on money won for the new season, with a card holder race and permit race offered to current WPRA members. Cowgirls traveled from near and far to compete at the prestigious World Finals, Nov. 7-10, and it was none other than 2014 world champion barrel racer, Fallon Taylor, winning the card holder competition. Taylor, who now lives in Collinsville, Texas, rode a relatively new horse in the \$15,000 added card holder race. FuryTyme is a five-year-old mare by Furyofthewind and out of Three Tymes A Lady. The team

won \$7,341 to count toward the 2025 world standings and earned an automatic bid to Rodeo Houston, March 4-23.

"Winning the card holder race was truly amazing for myself and my family. We have believed that Puma could shine on a big stage, and she is proving it not just to us but to everyone," Taylor said.

Taylor won her world championship on a mare she raised and trained herself, named Baby Flo, and has become well known across social media platforms. She purchased FuryTyme after a successful futurity year with Tricia Aldridge.

"We are so grateful for the many hours spent by Tricia while training her and forever grateful that she trusted us enough to sell her to us." It can be an adjustment going from running a homegrown

horse to something completely different, but Taylor is up for the challenge. The new team is off to a fast start for 2025 and hopes to continue winning down the rodeo road.

"We have big plans for 2025, as thousands of other people do, so we will spend the next several months letting Puma show us what she's made of on the rodeo road," Taylor said. The \$5,000 added permit race consisted of two runs, with the top 30 in the average qualifying for the short go, similar to the card holder race. It takes \$1,000 to fill a permit, in order to buy a card, and Ginger West was able to earn that amount in one weekend.

West, of Perry, Okla. won the first round and placed fourth in the second round, on her horse, Barreras Superman. They came

into the short go in the number two position, and then won the short go as well. After three runs, West finished number one in the average, filling her permit.

"I knew my horse, Superman, had the ability to perform well, even though he had only been competing since February, I have always believed there was something special about him," West said. "Entering the WPRA permit race was an opportunity to see if we could reach our goals and if our hard work and commitment would pay off."

It certainly did, with Superman also being voted Horse of the Year at the World Finals. It will be interesting to see where Taylor and West end up when 2025 concludes. The year is just getting started, and there are a lot of barrels left to run.

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Equine Vaccinations

By Heather Lloyd



Vaccinations are a critical component of responsible equine ownership. (Courtesy Photo)

Vaccinations are a critical component of maintaining the health and well-being of horses, especially in environments where they are exposed to other animals, such as in the sport, show and performance arenas.

Horses, like all animals, are susceptible to various infectious diseases that can spread quickly and cause serious harm.

A routine vaccination schedule helps prevent the spread of these diseases by preparing the horse's immune system.

Equine vaccinations generally focus on preventing diseases that are both common and potentially fatal.

Core vaccination guidelines, as outlined by the American Association of Equine Practitioners (AAEP), are intended to prevent

the spread of Eastern and Western Equine Encephalitis, Tetanus, West Nile Virus and Rabies.

These diseases can be transmitted through pests such as mosquitoes, or by injury in the case of tetanus, and have the potential to cause long-term health issues or even death if not controlled and properly treated.

Other risk based vaccines are also recommended to combat Influenza, Rhinopneumonitis, Strangles or other diseases that could affect a specific population based on age, geographic location or exposure.

Vaccination helps to mitigate these risks, ensuring that horses are better prepared to fight off infections should they occur.

The "5-way" vaccine is one of the most commonly adminis-

tered combination vaccinations for horses. It protects against the five major diseases listed above: Tetanus, Eastern and Western equine encephalitis, West Nile virus, and rabies. This vaccination is an easy way to prevent each of those diseases with one injection.

Each of these diseases poses a significant risk to horses, with potential for severe neurological effects or even death. Each of these diseases can be found in the North Texas area, making regular vaccinations even more critical for responsible horse ownership. The 5-way vaccine is typically given as part of a regular vaccination schedule.


This core vaccine is essential for all horses, but especially crucial for horses that are in areas where these diseases are prevalent

or for those in close contact with other horses, such as in boarding facilities or during competitions.

In conclusion, equine vaccinations play a critical role in managing the health of horses.

Regular vaccinations, such as the 5-way vaccine, help protect against dangerous diseases that can otherwise severely affect a horse's health.

Combined with proper biosecurity practices, these preventive measures reduce the risk of disease transmission and ensure a healthier environment for both individual horses and entire herds.

Maintaining a consistent vaccination schedule and adhering to strict biosecurity guidelines should be a priority for all horse owners to safeguard their animals from preventable diseases. 

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WHEN A CITY GIRL goes country

By Annette Bridges

Change Is In The Air

For many, a new year includes new beginnings. Oftentimes a new beginning may require a change of some sort. But perhaps a new beginning is not only a call for a change but more of a call for progress, growth, improvement, reform or a new outlook.

A change in one's point of view is probably necessary in order to gain a new outlook. Then that new perspective can result in fresh ideas, unforeseen opportunities, exciting inspirations and bold revelations.

Some folks caution, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." But I for one have often welcomed the idea of change and making changes. Before I met my country boy, my upbringing had long been filled with changes.

My mom and I moved frequently, so there wasn't one location or house I thought of as home. Home was wherever my mom was.

Every time we moved, we cleaned out and disposed of any unnecessary or unwanted items to make room for the new.

My mom said this helped us rid ourselves of clutter and make the most of our new space. So, our many changes in where we lived helped us to be more productive, efficient and creative.

Regardless of where we were living or how long we had lived there, my New Year tradition was rearranging and redecorating my bedroom. There were usually new items received at Christmas to find a place for. I enjoyed my

annual clean-out and rearranging of furniture and changing the wall décor, too.

Was it absolutely necessary that I make all the changes to my room each year? Probably not. But somehow making the changes encouraged my high anticipation for a New Year filled with new experiences and discoveries.

Although I have lived with my husband in the same farmhouse for over four decades now, I have continued my New Year childhood tradition, even if only in small ways. To make room for Christmas decorations each year requires that I pack up and store various home décor.

My New Year fun begins when packing up Christmas decorations. As I unpack all my stored home décor, I rearrange where I place items, finding new ways to use old things.

It's always amazing to me how making simple changes can make the old feel new again.

For me, change has been more of a good thing rather than bad. This is not to say that through the years I've not experienced difficult unwanted changes that required challenging adjustments.

Deaths of family members and friends as well as moves that involved separation from good friends or family were not easy changes.

And there have been times when I was forced to change schools or a job before I wanted to.

My life experiences have convinced me, however, that when



Annette knows that change can be good, even when it's hard. (Photo courtesy of Annette Bridges)

one door closes, another one really will open. There have always been exciting discoveries to be made and valuable growth to be experienced.

Remember this, my friends, if you are faced with changes this year.

You may discover that it's only your perspective that is keeping you from seeing an open door. And you may find a change can lead you to the perfect occasion, the right set of circumstances or a golden opportunity that makes your New Year extra happy. 🍷

From Verse to Worse

By Bryce Angell

I readied for the show and bought a brand new George Strait shirt.

I figured anything would help, for darn sure couldn't hurt.

I'd memorized my poems. They were imprinted in my brain.

But when I stepped

up on the stage, not one word could I claim.

The rhymes were all forgotten and no rhythm for a beat. My eyes were full of

sweat from all the sunshine's glaring heat.

You see, the emcee of the program asked a month or so ago, be a part of a cowboy poetry show.

"Would you like to?"

I told her I'd be nervous but would give it my best try. She said, nervous, just don't run off the stage and cry."

"I don't mind."

The audience was fidgeting. Their eyes were growing wide.

The crowd was

prob'ly thinking,

"This poor cowboy's gonna cry."

But one cowboy told me earlier,

"Don't worry you'll forget. Make sure your book is by your side. There'll be no need to fret."

Well sure enough my poems were laying right in front of me.

Someone had

placed them all face up. Just right for me to see.

I cleared my throat. I stood up straight. My confidence was sure. I stepped up to

the microphone. My stage fright was no more.

But the first word from my mouth was almost Julia Child height.

So I brought it

down and then I sounded just like Barry White.

I guess I should have practiced on my voice a whole lot more.

'Cuz mydiscontented audience was stepping out the door .

Right then I wondered if Shakespeareans ever had stage fright?"

Then someone

from behind me said,

"Please give it up tonight!"

I cut my cowboy routine short. I guess it had some flaws. When I stepped down

off the stage there was no one to give applause.

I finally saw a friendly face. My son had stuck around. I thought I better ask him

as he looked up from the ground.

"I guess I'm wondering how I did? At first I thought I croaked."

He looked at me and shook his head.

"Well Dad, I think you choked." 





New Year New Fashion

By Jesse Kader

A new year is the perfect time to select a new look.

I have been loving the classic equestrian styles that are out- such as shirts with horse prints, incorporating bits into everyday styles, and pulling from a hunter-jumper inspired look.

These are also a classy and timeless option.

I love a good horse print, or prints that have western and equestrian touches to them.

Pieces such as leather and bit-inspired belts, knee high hacking boots, layered sweaters, button-ups instead of pearl snaps, and house dresses are all seeing a surge in popularity. It seems we are seeing more and more equestrian-tack inspired apparel.

With these pieces, you can accessorize to your liking, using your accessories to keep it western. Some simple or statement turquoise and sterling silver go a long way.

Pictured here is a simple sweater with a horse print, but I made it fit my western flair by adding a bandana scarf and jewelry while pairing it with a good pair of jeans and a cute pair of boots.

Keep it simple or add your favorite statement pieces to make it your own. Start the new year off with the fashion you think makes the most accurate statement of who you are! Have a happy new year and check out these styles at Jesse's Jewels Boutique! 🍷



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Never Saw That Coming

By Kyleene Crossen



Kyleene Crossen raises highland cattle, which has taught her to never say, “I never saw that coming.”

Living on acreage and owning livestock has taught me a few things for certain. Never say the phrase “I never saw that coming.” Just as quickly as that sentence leaves your lips you will be wanting to retract those same words. Another one I’d recommend staying away from would be “could it get any worse?” It can and it could because their animals and you will never fully own them just know the vet bills will own you! All these years later of owning and caring for animals I can truthfully say life with animals is a dream and life well lived and loved!

But what happens when you really encounter those, I never saw it coming or could it get any worse moments? This year was one of those double whammy times for me or as some say the twofold blow or setback. A handful of years ago I had researched

in great length, and might I add dreamed and prayed a lot that an opportunity would come along that I could one day own a small herd of Highland Cattle. The moment I had long been waiting for came about in January of 2022. My husband and I were not at all new to the cattle raising market, but we were very new to this type of cattle breed. Might I add my husband also may have or may not have been fully on board, but it could be because he was just much more partial to the Angus breed. I had purchased two Highland heifers that same year just under the age of a year old and I was completely informed that they would not be of breeding maturity until two sometimes even three years of age. These two Highland heifer cows quickly became the center of my world from that moment on. They received special treats, daily

halter walks, frequented brushings and lots of media attention!

The Highland life was good! The two girls had been maturing wonderfully and now it was time to grow my herd. I researched and found a great bull prospect and worked it out to have the bull with my heifers over a three-month period during the winter months of 2023.

After three months of running with a bull I had them pregnancy checked, and it was a glorious day hearing the words “Bred” and not “Open.” Fast forward to calving day in the summer of 2024. Both of my first time heifers calved a month apart from one another with very slight assistance needed. That year’s crop I ended up with a bull calf and a heifer calf.

Life was good and I could finally breathe a sigh of relief that momma and babies were alive and

healthy. But what happened next, I truly never saw coming and even said could it get any worse.

Regardless of the number of livestock you have owned or seen come and go you never become completely immune to loss. In the same hand you and I will never be able to protect livestock from every scenario. The bull calf had been born first on my place and at this time had been a month old and thriving extremely well even with the hot summer temperatures. Highland cows are hairy cows to begin with and need to have access to water, a pond or stock tank especially in areas where the temperatures are excessively hot like North Texas. The stock tank on my land was extremely low and almost dried up at this time of year except for one tiny corner I found out the hard way. To the best of my

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understanding since I had not witnessed it the now month-old bull calf must have fell in and drown.

Heartbreaking and devastating to say the least. I was now officially sitting in my never saw that coming moment at this point. That double whammy that I mentioned earlier was next to come when I thought to say could it get any worse because it did. The new heifer had just been born the previous day in the hottest part of the day. The momma cow of the other baby I lost was still a little stressed from not knowing where her baby was anymore and now this new calf was not nursing without me assisting. Trying to mourn this huge loss had me on high alert and over drive trying to figure out every way the pastures could harm this baby too which was crazy if I'm being honest. What I've learned in this small season of my life is I cannot predict nor worry myself sick of the hundreds of ways the livestock that are under my care will or maybe never will injure themselves. What I can find some assurance in is remembering a few simple things while owning livestock and trying to get your dreams off the ground. Through-

out life with or even without livestock we will have some difficult things to process through and even some setbacks. There will never be a one size fits all, right way or wrong way to process heartbreak over the unexpected things we face while trying to grow a dream. What does matter though is to not allow the burdens of our guilt and shame of how we could have somehow handled it differently keep us stuck in that place. The unforeseen things in life can and will happen on the farm or off the farm for that fact. Because of this unexpected set back in growing a herd this one thing I know to be forever truer "He always comes alongside us to comfort us in every suffering so that we can come alongside those who are in any painful trial. We can bring them this same comfort that God has poured out upon us." From one small livestock owner to another my hope is you don't allow the I didn't see that coming moments keep you from following your dreams. Your dream just may take a little longer than you thought it should, but God knows exactly what He is doing when you think it couldn't get any worse! 



Crossen learned a lot of lessons while breeding highland cows. (Above) The herd of cows stays small, with Crossen only having a few at a time. (Below) (Photos courtesy of Kylene Crossen)





Colostrum: The Golden Milk

By Martha Crump, Wichita Falls Area Cattlewomen

Having herds on a controlled breeding schedule means that we have a predictable calving schedule, and while it's only over a couple of months, for us it does fall right after the start of the year. I lobby annually to call ours the "Winter calving season," but I am outvoted and my husband still refers to it as Spring.

Unlike producers in our Northern States, we don't have to contend with brutally harsh winter weather, and on those rare times we do, thankfully it is not for extended periods. Regardless of whether you have a spring or a fall calving schedule, the health of a newborn calf begins with the mother's health, and the mother's health is largely dependent on the producer.

To ensure a healthy offspring, a heifer or cow should have enough body reserves herself to support lactation and to develop colostrum in sufficient quantities. Colostrum is the "first milk" or "golden milk" that the heifer or cow produces immediately after calving, and when tested, it shows a different composition than the milk produced in later days.

The placenta in bovine is unique, as it stops maternal and fetal blood supplies from mixing. Due to this "separation," newborn calves are not born with a completely developed immune system. Instead, they depend on the colostrum from the dam to basically "borrow" her immune system until their own develops.

Under ideal circumstances colostrum is more nutrient dense than the milk produced later, and it contains antibodies that are known to be essential for the health of the calf. These high concentrations of antibodies act to prevent illness and fight pathogens. Colostrum also provides an abundance of proteins, lipids, vitamins, and min-



erals, allowing the calf to get the start it needs for healthy growth and development. This process is known as transferring passive immunity and provides antibodies called immunoglobulins.

Bovine colostrum contains 3 types of Immunoglobulin; A (IgA), G (IgG), and M (IgM). Of these three types, IgG is over 85% of the total immunoglobulin concentration found in colostrum. Of note, the gut of a calf can only absorb IgG in the first 24 hours of life. Consumption of colostrum during the first four to six hours is the ideal, because the cells in the lining of a calf's gut are primed to easily and quickly absorb IgG at birth. This gut absorptive ability will start to decline around 12 hours, and ends at around 24 hours following birth.

The consumption of adequate levels of colostrum early in life is associated with improved survivability, disease resistance, and growth rate to weaning. Colostrum, the prepartum transfer of immunoglobulins from maternal

circulation into mammary secretions in cattle, is known to start six to eight weeks prior to birth of the calf. As an example, given the breeding and gestation period for our herds, this process starts around the early part of November for our heifers, and in the early part of December for the mature cow herd.

Obviously the producer is not without a role in the process. We wean calves in late October/early November, processing the calves with a second round of vaccinations, and administering vaccines for their dams as well. Timely vaccinations provide more antibodies circulating in the cow's blood, resulting in a higher antibody level in the colostrum and an increased antibody load available for the calf. It takes about four weeks for the vaccine-induced antibodies to be as high as possible in the cow before colostrum production begins. This timing plan sets the stage for allowing our herds to develop colostrum with desirable antibody

levels.


In addition to timely vaccines, the heifer/cow herd should have an optimum Body Condition Score (BCS) by the start of calving season.

Prepartum nutrition significantly impacts colostrum production, changing both the amount and quality. In the late summer if it's been dry and droughty such as we experienced in this past year, we will already be putting out hay and ensuring mineral supplements are easily at hand, and this continues into the Fall. We are supplementing to ensure that adequate levels of mineral, metabolizable energy (ME) in the form of carbs and fat, and protein requirements are met. At this time of year the natural forage nutrient value is in decline, so supplementation needs will be increasing.

Remember, it is more efficient to condition dry cows than lactating cows. A target or optimum BCS for mature cows is 5-5.5, while heifers should be at 5.5 to 6 by the start of calving. Research has shown that calves born to a heifer with a BCS of 5-6 stood faster and had increased levels of IgG compared to calves born to heifers with a BCS of 3-4. A healthy cow with a BCS of 5 should produce approximately 95 g of IgG per liter of colostrum. Knowing the needs of your specific herd is critical, because overfeeding can be as detrimental as underfeeding regarding the quality of colostrum produced.

Other factors affecting colostrum output and quality include parity (number of times a cow has given birth), breed, seasonality, and temperature-humidity index (THI). Older cows, or cows that have given birth multiple times (multiparous) regularly produce more colostrum with higher IgG


continued on page 39



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A calves ability to nurse in the first 24 hours to receive colostrum is critical. (Photo courtesy of Martha Crump)

levels than heifers or younger cows. They also have had more exposure to the diseases for their particular herd, and/or may have had more pathogen-specific vaccines. Researchers have found that their calves will have higher levels of pathogen-specific antibodies compared to those born to heifers. Breed and genetics will determine milk quality and quantity as well, and although beef cattle producers aren't in the dairy business, we do want Mamas that give good milk.

There is considerable variation from genetics and breed type, but the average beef cow produces about 1 ½ gallons of milk per day during a lactation. Approximately 60-75 percent of the total milk produced will be in the first 60 days following calving.

Colostrum yield will also fluctuate with the seasons. Yields peak in June, and will fall dramatically by December across breeds and geographical areas. Another factor is the Temperature-Humidity Index (THI). High THI levels just prior to calving may degrade colostrum quality and reduce IgG levels.

In a perfect world, calves are

born with no need for intervention. But, just in case that's not the case, then what needs to happen? If the calf is too weak to stand, or has experienced a difficult birth, this can negatively impact their ability to suckle. Or if the dam abandons the calf, or simply refuses to let the calf nurse, then intervention becomes necessary.

The very best option is to feed colostrum from the dam herself. This means having the ability to pen and hold the heifer/cow and help the calf to safely nurse, or to milk the dam and bottle feed the colostrum to the calf. If collecting colostrum is not an option, then a colostrum replacer should be fed.

Please be aware that there is a difference between a colostrum "replacer" and a colostrum "supplement". A colostrum replacer is meant to fully replace colostrum from the dam, and will contain more than 100 g of IgG per dose as well as the protein, fat, vitamins, and minerals necessary for the calf's first meal. A colostrum supplement not only has lower levels of IgG per dose, it will not contain additional nutrients.

It is recommended that new-

born calves should receive 5% of their body weight in colostrum, which typically amounts to about two quarts.

Another important consideration is to warm up a wet or cold calf before handfeeding colostrum. In our rush to take care of a new baby having a rough start, the thought process is often "Oh let's hurry and get some good warm stuff in this baby's stomach and that will help!" Because a calf's gut is not as motile when they are cold, it can negatively affect how the nutrients and immunoglobulins in colostrum are absorbed. First warm the calf up a bit, then feed the warm colostrum replacer. If a calf lacks the vigor to nurse, then tubing will be required.

Fortunately research has shown that there is minimal difference in IgG absorption when comparing nipple feeding versus esophageal tube feeding.

Again, tube feeding can certainly utilize colostrum obtained directly from the dam, or if that is not possible, then feeding should be in the form of a replacer, not a supplement. From the prepartum environment to the time of colos-

trum consumption, the biggest factor in increasing colostrum production is management. From vaccination schedules, to nutrition, through breeding and into calving, good producers have good herds due to good management practices. It's as simple, or complicated, as that. Also, have a good relationship with your local vet, and keep his/her number on speed dial just in case! Heifers... enough said.

The Wichita Falls Area CattleWomen gathered for their annual Christmas Social with spouses and friends. It was held at the Loft in Wichita Falls on December 5th, and celebrated the installation of new officers for 2025.

The incoming President is Irene Henry, Vice President, Rossi Smith, Secretary, Julie Swanda, Treasurer, Kathy Smyers, & Immediate Past President, Debbie Gill.

Installation of officers was conducted by Linda Thorman, WFACW member, 2025 Texas CattleWomen President, and ANCW Region IV Director. Vickie Moser was honored as the Outstanding Member for 2024 due to her unwavering commitment to serve in any and all capacities. Numerous WFACW legacy members were able to attend as well. The next meeting of the WFACW organization will be on Jan. 21 at the Forum in Wichita Falls, Texas at 11:30 a.m. Members attending the midday meeting are encouraged to bring their lunch and enjoy eating and visiting. WFACW membership recruitment is ongoing. As a reminder, anyone is eligible to join the CattleWomen's organization. You do not have to own cattle. If you are a supporter of the Ag industry, then we might be an organization that you would enjoy. Please consider joining us for a meeting (always on the third Tuesday of the month) to get an idea of how our involvement encompasses not only our local area, but extends into State, Regional, and National efforts as well. 🇺🇸



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**WHEN YOU BREAK THE AWFUL TRUTH TO YOUR
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Resolve To

By Lisa Rodgers



Making resolutions is an expected activity each new year. (Courtesy Photo)

Resolve to lose weight, save money, read more. Become more reflective in 2025 and resolve to practice gratitude, be more present or increase your emotional intelligence.

All common, attention-worthy suggestions and potentially life-changing New Year's resolutions.

There are plenty of articles and material on how to set an intentional goal and steps to make it attainable, especially this time of the year.

The main takeaways are disci-

pline must take effect when motivation wanes, the goal should be meaningful, break the goal down into steps and create a strategy.

If that seems like a lot of work, maybe reflect on the goal and make sure it is worth your effort.

New Year's resolutions are exciting and motivating for some. The beginning of the year might as well be the dawn of a new era.

Goals are set with intention, plans are made, and at some point, results are achieved.

There is something admirable

about the discipline that goes with setting a New Year's resolution and being in the minority of those who actually follow through and keep their resolutions.


Even those who do not completely follow through with their resolutions should be admired.


They earn this admiration because they have enough introspect and hope to at least set a goal and hopefully give themselves grace when that goal is not reached within their ideal timeline.

I have spent the last few months

really working on my viewpoints and habits. When I look back on where I started, on where I am today and my goals of where I want to be, I have basically given myself a resolution.

My journey just happened to begin before Jan. 1, 2025.

Perhaps if I take baby steps into this New Year's resolution phenomena in 2025 by choosing to build upon what I have already started, I might just get the hang of this whole New Year's resolution thing. 



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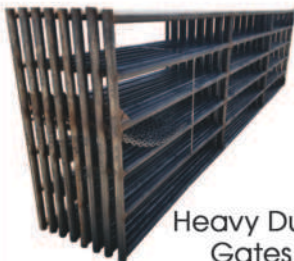
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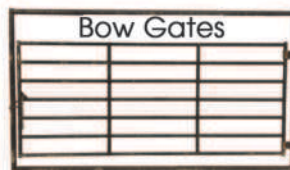
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# Lonestar Open Auctioneer Championships

By Texas Auctioneers

Join us for the Lone Star Open (LSO) Auctioneer Championship, set to take place on Sunday, Feb. 2, alongside the Fort Worth Stock Show and Rodeo (FWSSR).

This exciting event will feature a \$20,000 prize for the grand champion auctioneer, as well as insightful presentations on the auction method of marketing and the dynamic auctioneering profession.

Now in its eighth year, the LSO is an open contest that attracts auctioneers of all ages from across the nation.

Competitors will participate in a preliminary round, culminating in a finals round with the top five

contestants.

“If you’re curious about the auctioneering profession or considering an auction yourself, come see us. The Texas Auctioneers Association (TAA), sponsor of this event, will have members available to discuss all aspects of the business,” said Troy Robinett, TAA officer and co-founder of the LSO Championship.

The contest begins at 4:30 p.m. in the Roundup Inn at FWSSR, and admission to the Stock Show includes entry to this event.


Attendees can also register to bid on more than 100 items offered by contestants and the TAA.

For more details, visit [\[texas-auctioneers.org\]\(http://texas-auctioneers.org\) and join us at the FWSSR for a lively competition among auctioneers specializing in cars, cattle, estates, benefits, and more—all vying for the \\$20,000 prize and championship title!](http://texas-</a></p>
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The Lone Star Open (LSO) Auctioneer Championship annually awards a full-tuition scholarship to a young person aspiring to attend auctioneer school. This scholarship covers all tuition costs at the recipient’s school of choice, offering a launchpad into the dynamic field of auctioneering.

Eligible applicants must be either high school seniors, undergraduates, or graduate students enrolled at an accredited college,

university, or technical school. Applications are due by Jan. 15, 2025, and full details can be found under the LSO tab at [www.texas-auctioneers.org](http://www.texas-auctioneers.org).

The scholarship recipient will be announced at the upcoming Lone Star Open on Sunday, Feb. 2, at the Roundup Inn on the grounds of the Fort Worth Stock Show & Rodeo. The event will showcase 25 top auctioneers from across the U.S. competing for a \$20,000 grand prize, along with a custom saddle, buckle, and the distinguished LSO title. The public is invited to attend, enjoy the spirited bidding, and purchase from over 100 items on offer. 



Auctioneers play an important, but often overlooked, role in the cattle industry, making cattle sales possible. (Courtesy photo)



# On the Road WITH DAVE ALEXANDER



## Bob Wills Music- It's A Global Thing

Bob Wills Music, it's a global thing! The 2024 Birthplace Of Western Swing Music Festival held annually in Fort Worth ,

Texas is officially in the history books. This fantastic festival celebrated 93 years of Western Swing and this years' show will be a hard one to beat.

Each year festival creator Mike Markwardt features the top in Western Swing entertainers from across the country. This year Mike featured a new and fairly unknown act from Rome, Italy. You read it right, Rome, Italy.

Mary Lee and Caesar's Cowboys brought down the house with their spot on renditions of

music by Bob Wills. Mary Lee's impeccable vocals along with her Texas style fiddling left hard core Texas Western Swing fans in awe. Her band along with steel guitarist Flavio Pasquetto laid down a hard swinging groove that filled the dance floor.

It's hard to believe that the music of a young fiddler from Turkey, Texas named Bob Wills, is still bringing joy to the world almost a century later.

Long live Bob Wills..... It's a global thing.

Listen to Dave Alexander's Radio Show-

Big Texas Country and Western Swing Show 



Dave Alexander and Mary Lee pose together.



Mary Lee & Caesar's Cowboys came from Rome, Italy to compete in the Birthplace of Western Swing Music Festival. (Photos courtesy of Dave Alexander)





# Preparing Spring Gardens

By Hannah Claxton, Editor

The North Texas area is located within USDA Hardiness zones seven and eight. The zones are categorized by predicted low temperatures for winter and timing of the first and last frosts.

Zone seven usually has winter low temps between 0 and 10 degrees F with the average date of the first frost falling between Oct. 29 and Nov. 15 and the average date of the last frost falling between March 22 and April 3.

Overall, these two zones have similar climates and growing conditions, making the options for timing and variety within a garden very similar.

In these zones, cool-season

crops should go in the ground in March, meaning that soil preparation should start now.

Preparing the soil is easier if the ground is already set up from a previous garden, but the first step still starts with removing grass, rocks, and debris.

Once the soil is cleared, it needs to be loosened. Using a spade to twist and move the dirt allows the roots to move through the soil easier and reach down to more nutrient-dense depths. Loosening soil 8-12 inches is ideal.

The primary reason behind beginning preparations now is to have time to compost. Adding compost feeds the soil, but also

increases drainage, creates oxygen sources, and anchors plant roots. Placing two to three inches of compost on top of your garden and then mixing it through is the best way to ensure the even spread of nutrients.

Come March, cool-season crops can go in the ground, while warm-season crops can be started indoors. In April, follow with root crops. Once the last frost has fallen, transplant warm-season crops outdoors.


In May, herbs, warm-season annuals, tuberous perennials, and companion plants can be planted. In June, many of the cool season plants will be ready for harvest,

and a second round of warm-season plants can be planted in their place.

Shrubs such as hydrangeas, azaleas, rhododendrons, and boxwoods grow well in these zones.

Herbs like lavender, rosemary, thyme, and oregano will thrive. Perennial plants such as daylilies, irises, coneflowers, asters, peonies, roses, hibiscus, bee balm, salvia, and yarrow do well.

Vegetables such as broccoli, carrots, cabbage, spinach, lettuce, peas, radishes, and beets are particularly suited for the region.

All in all, it is good preparation now that leads to plentiful harvests. 



**Do you enjoy writing?**

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**Hannah Claxton: [editor@ntfronline.com](mailto:editor@ntfronline.com)**



# Being A Woman In The Outdoor Industry

By Emily Gleason

The outdoor, hunting, and fishing industries have long been perceived traditionally as a male-dominated realm. However, as societal norms shift, the experiences of women in these industries have been increasingly coming to the forefront.

Being a woman in the outdoor industry today is a complex blend of passion, perseverance, and community, marked by both challenges and triumphs.

Women who hunt or engage in outdoor activities frequently find themselves confronting preconceived notions about their capabilities and interests.

Many of us have experienced skepticism or outright disbelief when we express our enthusiasm for hunting or other outdoor activities.

Despite these stereotypes, women are increasingly challenging and redefining what it means to be involved in these activities. Female hunters and outdoor enthusiasts are not only participating but excelling in such skills.

They contribute unique perspectives and insights to the hunting community, showcasing that passion for the outdoors knows no gender.

Personally, one of the most rewarding aspects of being a woman in the outdoor industry is the sense of community that I have seen develop among female hunters and anglers.

Over the past few years, numerous organizations and networks have emerged, dedicated to supporting women in these spaces.

There are now many online platforms and pages for women to connect, share experiences, and learn from one another. These

communities foster a sense of belonging, helping women navigate the often intimidating world of outdoor activities.

Through all-female hunting trips, all-female social media groups and pages, etc. women are finding solidarity and empowerment among their peers.

These gatherings are not just about learning skills; they are also about celebrating shared passions and creating a supportive environment where women can ask questions, learn the industry, and be themselves!

The camaraderie built in these spaces often leads to lifelong friendships and collaborations, reinforcing the idea that the outdoor industry can be inclusive and welcoming.

While the outdoor community is growing and evolving, women in the industry still face significant challenges.

One of the most pressing issues is the lack of representation in leadership roles within hunting organizations and outdoor brands.

Despite the growing number of women participating in these activities, many leadership positions remain predominantly occupied by men. This dynamic can perpetuate a cycle where women's voices and perspectives are underrepresented in decision-making processes, including product development and marketing strategies.

Additionally, the outdoor apparel industry has historically catered to men, leaving women with limited options when it comes to equipment and apparel. Many women, myself included, have reported frustrations over ill-fitting gear and clothing that does not account for our specific



Gleason goes by the handle @the.camo.cowgirl to share about her adventures as a woman in the outdoors.

needs. However, as the demand for women's gear increases, brands are beginning to respond. Companies are starting to recognize that female consumers are a significant market and are starting to develop products tailored to women's preferences and requirements.

Despite the challenges, women in the outdoor industry are becoming powerful advocates for change. Myself and others are using our platforms to push **continued on page 49**





Hunting and conservation go hand-in-hand and Gleason is proud to demonstrate that. (Photos courtesy of Emily Gleason)

for change. Myself and others are using our platforms to push for greater representation and inclusivity.

We are challenging outdated perceptions by sharing our stories on social media, showcasing our skills, and highlighting the importance of conservation and ethical hunting practices.

This visibility helps to dismantle stereotypes and encourages more women to enter these fields.

Moreover, women are increasingly involved in conservation efforts, recognizing that responsible hunting and outdoor activities are integral to environmental stewardship.

Something that I am very pas-

sionate about is advocating for sustainable practices and engaging in initiatives that promote wildlife conservation.

This dual role as a hunter and conservationist allows us to contribute positively to the ecosystem while redefining the narrative around hunting as a male-centric activity.

I am proud to see a bright future for women in the outdoor industry.

As more of us embrace our passion for the outdoors and take on leadership roles, the industry is poised for significant transformation.

Brands are beginning to prioritize diversity in marketing campaigns, showcasing women in various outdoor pursuits and highlighting their contributions to the community.

Furthermore, the rise of female role models in the outdoor space is inspiring the next generation of female hunters and outdoor enthusiasts.


Young girls who see women actively participating in these activities are more likely to envision themselves in similar roles, fostering a new wave of female adventurers.

Being a woman in the outdoor industry has been and will continue to be a journey filled with challenges and triumphs.

While the landscape is evolving, there is still work to be done to ensure that women are fully represented and respected in these spaces.

The growing sense of community, advocacy for inclusivity, and the increasing visibility of female role models are all promising signs of progress.

As we continue to break barriers and redefine what it means to be a part of the outdoor industry, we are not only enriching our own experiences but also paving the way for future generations to explore the great outdoors with confidence and passion.

*Emily Gleason is a North Texas resident residing in Fort Worth. She is a content creator, social media manager, and published model who shares her outdoor adventures on social media under the handle @the.camo.cowgirl. To learn more about Emily and her advocacy for conservation and women in the outdoors, follow along on social media. *





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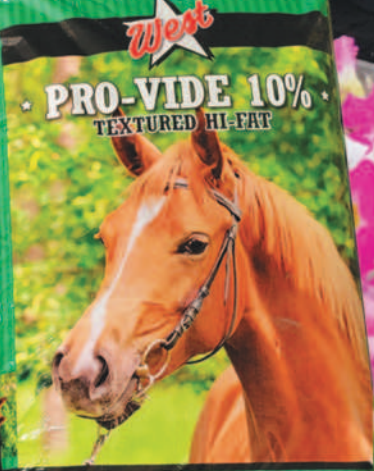
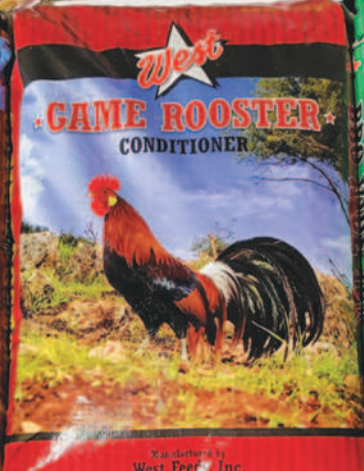
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# The GARDEN GUY

By Norman Winter | Horticulturist, Author, Speaker

## Unplugged Salvia

The Unplugged salvia group is growing to four in 2025 and it can be your start to an epic red, white and blue garden.

There is also an Unplugged Pink that has 26 awards in the trophy case. Unplugged So Blue and Unplugged Pink have won a whopping 63 awards in what seems to be just a couple of years. Plus, what I am seeing in my own garden makes me think the new Unplugged Red and Unplugged White will be winning some hardware too!

The unplugged salvias give The Garden Guy a lot to talk about. Truth be known, I wanted to title this column Unpacking the Unpluggeds. Microsoft Word has already redlined that but I'll persist and see if the bevy of editors along the way to a published column take exception. The unpacking should be fun if I do it right.

Unplugged So Blue salvia was the first and has been outstanding with 37 awards. Botanically speaking it is a *Salvia farinacea*, commonly called a mealy cup sage. Gosh I hate that common name. I suppose it is because I always look at things from a marketing standpoint. If you think about it winning a quick 37 awards when there are so many named varieties in the marketplace it is amazing. I wrote a column on this a couple of years ago giving my take that the name Unplugged was suggesting unplugging from

all our electronics and gardening with this great salvia. Shoot, I am really clueless why Proven Winner chose that name.

The second in the group was Unplugged Pink. This caused great concern among those of us with white in the hair for one huge reason and that being that it looks for all the world to be a *Salvia guaranitica* hybrid, commonly called anise sage. Proven Winners tags it as a *Salvia* hybrid, which of course is true but even if your humble horticulturist turned garden writer hasn't been able to find the parentage. The bigger question is can you have different species in the Unplugged group, but I digress.

If that made the old-timers crazy, the third and newest member of the group, Unplugged Red, sent us over the cliff. Unplugged Red will debut in 2025 and is a flaming *Salvia coccinea*. The common names of this species are blood sage, scarlet sage and Indian fire. So now that gives the Unplugged group three species. Unplugged Red is so drop dead gorgeous all I can say is welcome to the group.

The fourth member also making its debut in 2025 is Unplugged White. Like Unplugged So Blue it is a *Salvia farinacea* or mealy cup sage. I took notice of a Perfect Score in Penn State Trials so I would expect this will be an award winner too when all the data is tabulated.

Besides being award winning


salvias, they are just the right garden size, 24-30 inches tall. This also opens the door for use as the thriller in mixed containers. Unplugged So Blue.

White and Red all have DNA from the southern United States while Unplugged Pink presumably has DNA from South America.

All of these have no problem being perennial in my zone 8 Georgia garden and most certainly worth every penny as an annual. As far as encouraging a spring return, fertile well-drained soil is the key. Bees, butterflies and hummingbirds will be an added

reward in addition to their beautiful blooms, no matter whether grown as an annual or perennial.

So, should Proven Winners read this column, here is The Garden Guy's next wish. Get the gardening world a compact, mild-mannered *Salvia uliginosa*, and call it Unplugged Sky Blue. This will give us four of the greatest species on the planet. The Unplugged salvias deserve a spot in your garden for 2025.

Follow me on Facebook @ NormanWinterTheGardenGuy for more photos and garden inspiration. 



Unplugged So Blue salvia was the first in the Unplugged group and has won 37 awards. Here it is seen with Heat it Up Yellow gaillardia or blanket flower. (Photo courtesy of Norman Winter)





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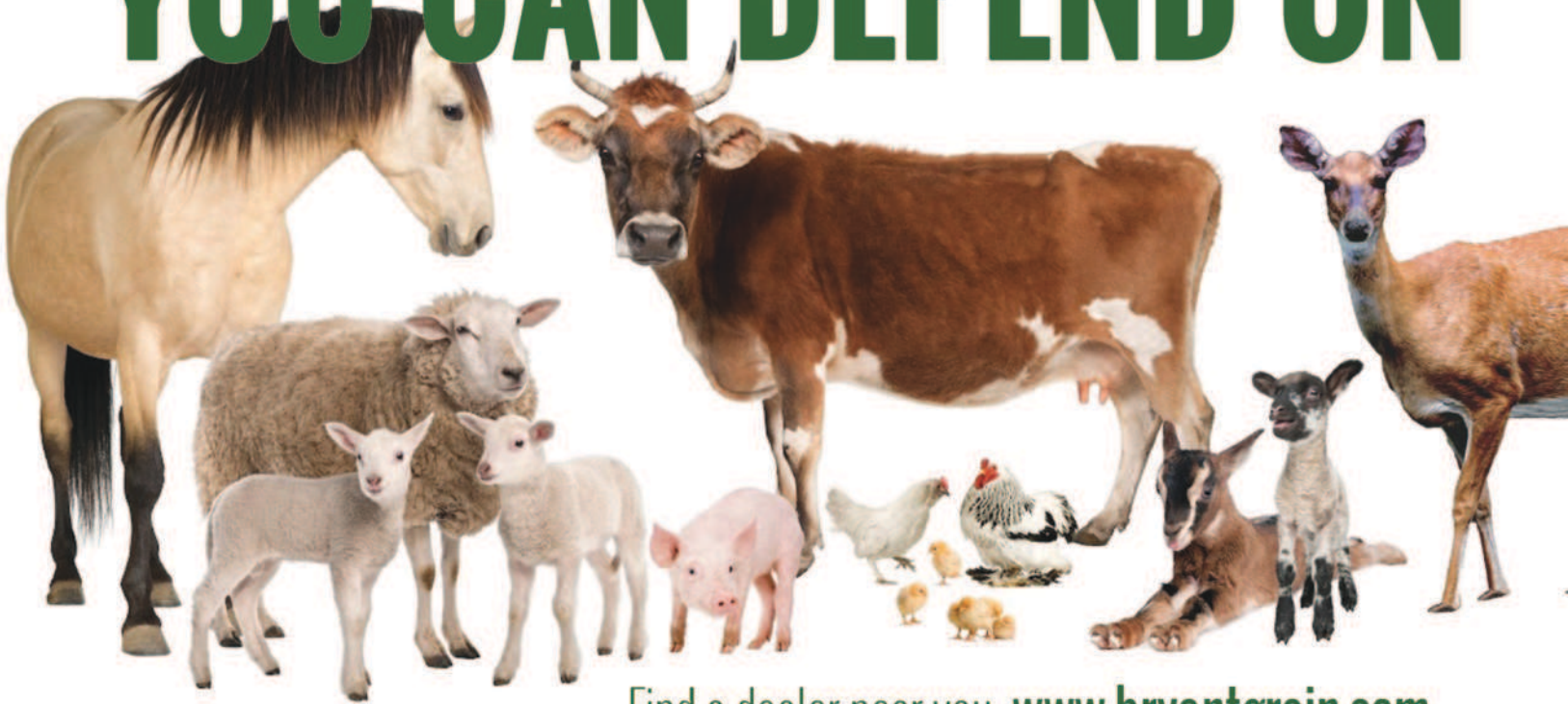
## Sun Bleached Pony

By Jelly Cocanougher

She's learning how and what it means to be a good horse. She's full of charm, spending her day exploring and reveling in the simple pleasures of nature. She has a spark of curiosity and wonder, simultaneously gentling her mom from the unruly brood she is. She's a sun bleached pony, wild and full of fire. Her hooves pounded across the soft earth, eyes twinkling with mischief and a draw for life. 



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